



U.S. citizens caught up in West Bank violence

INSIDE, 4A

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Public defender shortage ripples across legal system



Without enough lawyers providing indigent defense, defendants sit in jail longer, plead without guidance and risk wrongful convictions. Prosecutors face delays in clearing their cases. Court dockets slow, costs rise and public trust declines. GETTY IMAGES

Lack of lawyers leads to criminal cases being dismissed

Georges Naufal and Emily Naiser
Texas A&M University
THE CONVERSATION

The Oregon Supreme Court on Feb. 5 issued a ruling that will have a wide impact. More than 1,400 criminal cases had to be dismissed, the justices ruled, due to lack of adequate counsel available for defendants.

Like other states, Oregon must provide defendants with legal representation if they cannot afford attorneys on their own. But Oregon has less than one-third of the attorneys it needs to provide adequate defense for indigents, or people who can't afford counsel on their own.

Shortages of this scope are common around the country. Pennsylvania faces a similar shortage of about 30% of the public defenders it needs, with insufficient numbers of attorneys in nearly every county. New Mexico needs 67% more attorneys to provide effective counsel. Kansas needs 277 more public defenders, or roughly triple its current number.

As public policy researchers who study legal defense issues, we believe



The Sixth Amendment guarantees individuals facing criminal charges the right to defense counsel, at government expense if required. GETTY IMAGES

it's clear that such shortages have repercussions throughout the criminal justice system.

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longer, plead without guidance and risk wrongful convictions. Prosecutors face delays in clearing their cases.

See **SHORTAGE**, Page 4A

WHITE RIVER FORESTRY COMMITTEE

Wildflower hike near Bedford planned

Janis Reeser
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The White River Forestry Committee will host its annual Wildflower Hike on April 11 at a family property on Coxtton Road west of Bedford. The event aims to showcase the area's rich variety of spring wildflowers, according to a community announcement.

Wildflower hike details and registration

The hike will take place in two sessions: 10:30 a.m.-noon and 1-2:30 p.m. Adults will pay a \$10 fee to participate, with any funds raised above costs supporting future educational efforts by the White River Forestry Committee. Light refreshments will be provided, and attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch for a picnic, according to the announcement.

See **HIKE**, Page 2A

Middle-Eastern restaurant serves halal fare on Grant Street

Carol Kugler
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Bloomington's first restaurant offering Arabic halal food is drawing crowds to 228 S. Grant St., just south of East Third Street.

Owner Asef Khademi first began the restaurant in August of 2025 as a ghost kitchen in the Turkuaz Cafe space after the Turkish restaurant closed for the night. After four months, with take-out orders exploding, he began looking for another location.

The Coffee Beanery had originally planned on sharing its space with a Coldstone Creamery. That never happened. But it meant there was room for

See **RESTAURANT**, Page 2A

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